

Remarks

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 8, 9, 12, 13, 20, 21, and 27 are allowable and that claims 7 and 26 are directed to allowable subject matter. Further, in the final Office Action of November 23, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 14-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,517,671 to Parks et al. ("Parks"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,065,088 to Bronson et al. ("Bronson") and U.S. Patent No. 5,928,354 to Umeki et al. ("Umeki"); rejected claims 1, 2, and 5, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Bronson in view of Umeki; and rejected claims 22-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Bronson.

By this Amendment, Applicants propose amending claim 1 to substantially include the features previously recited in claim 26 and amending claim 7 into independent form. Claims 14-19 and 22-26 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 2, 5, 7-9, 12, 13, 20, and 21 would remain pending.

In view of these claim amendments, Applicants submit that all of the pending claims are claims that include features that the Examiner has indicated as allowable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the various rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on combinations of Parks, Bronson, and Umeki are obviated and should be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1, 2, 5, 7-9, 12, 13, 20, and 21 in condition for allowance. Applicants note that the proposed amendments do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of

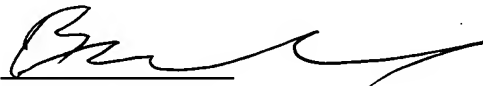
the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were substantially included in previously examined claims. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1070 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

HARRITY SNYDER, L.L.P.

By: 
Brian E. Ledell
Reg. No. 42,784

11350 Random Hills Road
Suite 600
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
(571) 432-0800
Customer Number: 44987

Date: January 17, 2006